Wow! Wasn’t the melon fly trap average terrible? Believe it or not, there was a silver lining in the recent fly population buildup. The situation was instructive. Recently, extension entomologist, Ron Mau, and extension agent Robin Shimabuku focused on the issue. They found a common situation—melon flies observe no boundaries.

The extremely high trap catches at Farm-A did not coincide with the occurrence of high on-farm melon fly breeding. Instead, there had been heavy fruit infestation levels at an adjacent Farm-B. The resulting melon flies that emerged from the fruit at Farm-B had decided that the plants (roosting hosts) at Farm-A were the place to reside, mate, and mature. The gravid (with mature eggs) females had to fly a bit further than usual back to Farm-B to deposit her load of eggs.

Imagine this, the females could not see the fruit crop from the roosting location, but you can be sure that they could sense the odors from the crop.

The situation underscored one point—we have to be careful in making the wrong conclusions from the trap catch maps. Melon flies often are found close to the crop, but only if there are suitable roosting hosts. A working knowledge of melon fly behavior, a bit of common sense, and detective work is useful. The melon flies produced at your farm may come back to bite you. Don’t let low trap counts lull you into complacency. Make sure you remove culls from the field and dispose of them properly. HAW-FLYPM staff members really enjoy working with you. We get great satisfaction from your successful farm enterprises. Call us if you have questions or special situations that we can help with.

Cheng Traps for Male Melon Fly Annihilation!

HAW-FLYPM staff members are implementing the third control tactic—melon fly annihilation. We have begun to place yellow, cone-shaped traps starting at the Kula Agricultural Park farms. The traps, baited with cue lure and Dibrom concentrate insecticide-impregnated pads, will be placed on certain vegetation in crop borders and other locations. These traps utilize the attract and kill tactic. Baited pads in the traps will attract and continue to kill male melon flies for at least two months.

Please be aware that this third tactic does not replace the more effective first two—field sanitation and GF-120 bait sprays. Field sanitation is the basic fruit fly control tactic. You don’t have to kill what you don’t breed. GF-120 is considered the second most-effective tactic because it attracts and kills both male and female fruit flies. The early implementation of the male annihilation tactic is being done to supplement the first two. By itself, the tactic to kill only males is not thought to be totally effective in suppressing fly numbers unless populations are very low.